Webster University Increasing Access for Science Scholars

Presented by:
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Objectives of Today's Presentation

- Provide an overview of Webster University.
- Explore some of the reasons Webster is considered a transfer-friendly university.
- Share information about Webster's growing programs in the Department of Biological Sciences.
- Share brief history about the collaborative process Webster embarked upon in creating a vision for an Interdisciplinary Sciences building, and how that vision became a reality.
- Describe Webster's plan to increase access for academic study in the biological sciences through the WATTS Scholarship program.
- Share what we have learned thus far in working with this grant.
- Invite community college colleagues to partner with us in bringing these scholarly opportunities to your students!

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Who is Webster University?

- Non-profit, regionally accredited, liberal arts university founded in 1915
- 120+ undergraduate academic programs across 5 colleges & schools
  - George Herbert Walker School of Business & Technology
  - Leigh Gerdine College of Fine Arts
  - School of Communications
  - School of Education
  - College of Arts & Sciences
- Global university with local impact
  - Home campus in Webster Groves, MO
  - Residential campuses on 4 continents/7 countries
  - Locations in 60 cities across U.S.
  - Robust online graduate and undergraduate programs
- More than 17,000 students worldwide
- Approximately 3,000 undergraduate students at home campus

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Webster is 'Transfer-Friendly'

- About 40% of undergraduates started as transfer students
  - Community college and 4-year transfers

- Generous transfer credit allowance:
  - 98 hours within completed associate degree
  - 64 hours without completed associate degree
  - AA, 42-hour block will satisfy general education

- Military-friendly

- Transfer Tools & Resources:
  - Online Transfer Equivalency Database
  - Free estimated transfer credit evaluations prior to admission
  - Developing additional 2+2 agreements with community college partners to create clear pathways toward 4-year degree
  - Missouri Reverse Transfer Program
  - Prior Learning Assessment options
  - Student Success Portal and 1:1 meetings with academic advisors, career and academic counselors, and faculty advisors.

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Webster is 'Transfer-Friendly'

- Transfer Admission Profile:
  - 2.5 cumulative GPA
  - Application for admission, transcripts, $35 application fee
  - Add'l requirements for Fine Arts, Nursing applicants
  - Each applicant receives thorough review
    - Evidence of potential for success at Webster
  - Academic scholarship review at time of admission

- Transfer-Specific Scholarships
  - Merit-based academic– *up to $15,000*
  - Phi Theta Kappa Distinguished Achievement- *Full-tuition, April 1 deadline*
  - Phi Theta Kappa - *$1,000 for PTK members*
  - Transfer Leadership – *Dec. 1 and May 1 deadlines*
  - Others: A+, Proud to Serve, Alumni Legacy
  - WATTS for Biology & Chemistry majors – *up to $10,000*

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Overview of Webster Science Programs

- Bachelor of Arts in **Biology**
  - *Emphasis in Health Science*
  - *Emphasis in Education*
  - *Emphasis in Biodiversity*

- Bachelor of Science in **Biological Sciences**
  - *Emphasis in Research & Technology*
  - *Emphasis in Health & Medicine*

- Bachelor of Science in **Computational Biology**
- Bachelor of Science in **Chemistry**
- Bachelor of Science in **Exercise Science**

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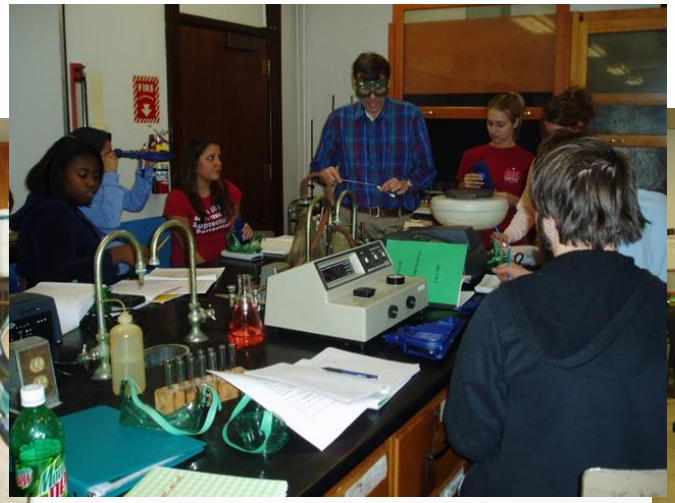
From *Vision* to *Reality*:
Interdisciplinary Sciences, Browning Hall

Previous Facilities:

- Webster Hall Labs:
  - 1 Chemistry, 1 Physics, 1 Faculty Research lab
  - 3 Biology (one without sink)
  - 1 cadaver lab (with 2 cadavers, fits 5 students)



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From *Vision* to *Reality*:
Interdisciplinary Sciences, Browning Hall

Recognizing a Need:

- Student Enrollments in the sciences increased over 300% in 10 years
- All students majoring in Biological Sciences are required to complete an independent research project for senior capstone
- Identified need for more lab space– explored few different ideas to accomplish this
- 2012/2013- University commitment to building new space for College of Arts & Sciences--- would be INTERDISCIPLINARY
  - Collaborative process involving ALL stakeholders at ALL steps of the planning process

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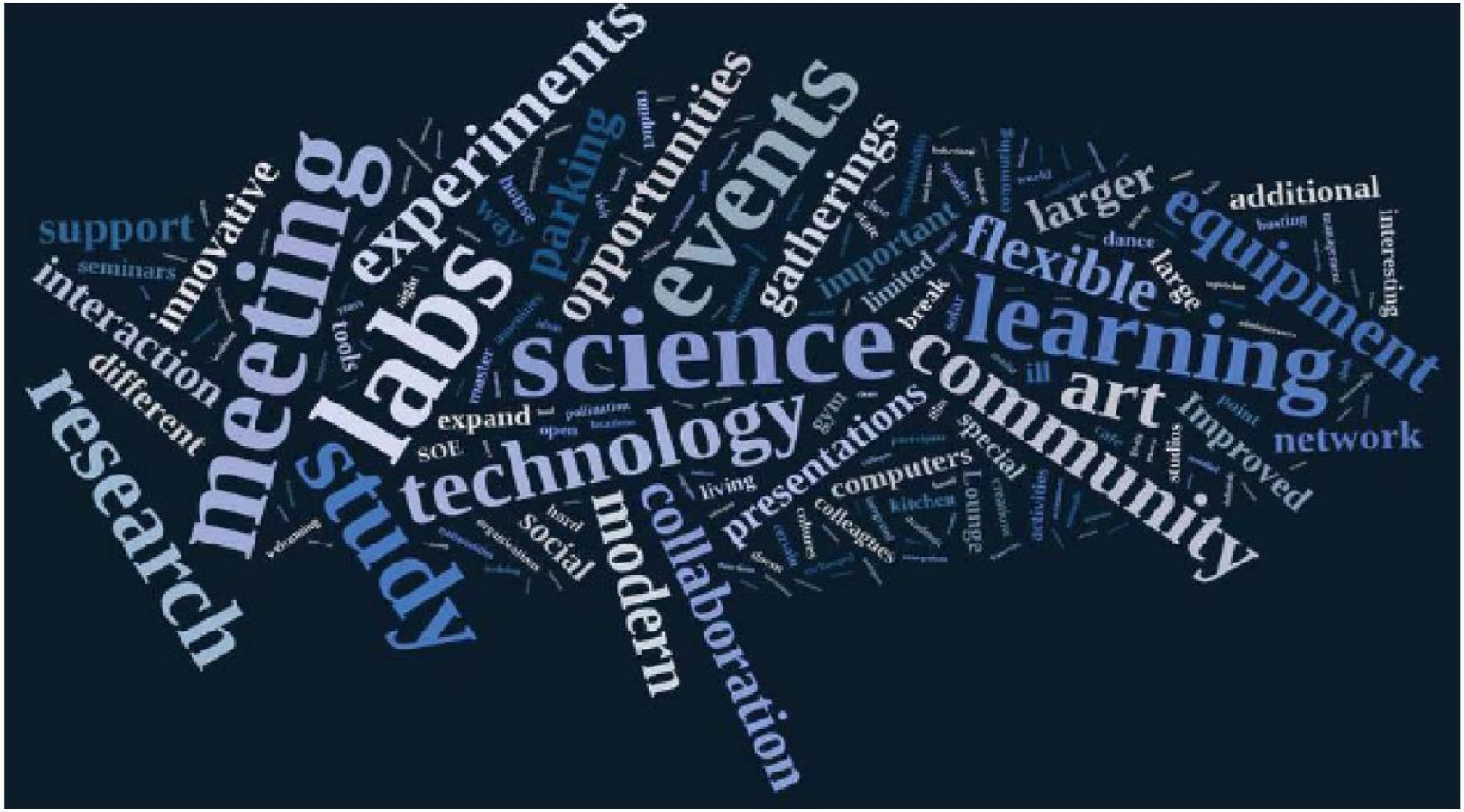
HOW DO YOU ENVISION USING THIS FACILITY AND WHAT BENEFITS WILL YOU GAIN?



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General Project Requirements

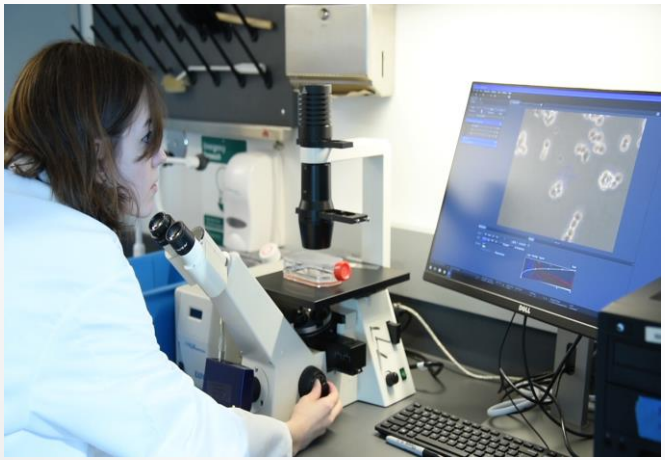
1. What is the primary purpose, program, and use of this project? (What is the end game?)

- Provide a state of the art facility for teaching and research in the STEM field for undergraduate and graduate programs.
- Build a building for Webster University and its College of Arts and Sciences designed with lab areas, dean's office, and a continuous growth path for the college.
- Interdisciplinary learning environment to help learn from similar STEM departments and encourage collaboration amongst the various departments in the College of Arts & Sciences and other colleges and schools.

From *Vision* to *Reality*:
Interdisciplinary Sciences, Browning Hall

New Facilities:

- 27 laboratories including:
  - Kitchen Laboratory
  - Computational Lab
  - Qualitative & Quantitative Lab
- 129-seat auditorium
- Numerous Commons areas for students and faculty to collaborate



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From *Vision* to *Reality*:
Interdisciplinary Sciences, Browning Hall

New Facilities:

The

Increasing Access: WATTS Scholarship for Biology & Chemistry Transfer Students

- WATTS: Winning Approaches for Talented Transfers in STEM
  - National Science Foundation Grant
  - Up to $10,000 WATTS Award to Eligible students
  - 6 awards per year for 3 years

Objectives:

1. Recruit and enroll 18 academically talented and financially needy community college transfer students into biological sciences degree programs.
2. Retain 100% of WATTS participants to graduation in biological sciences by creating a system of new and existing support practices and analyzing how they affect the success of academically talented, low-income transfer students.
3. Prepare WATTS scholars for careers or graduate-level study so at least 90% secure employment in a STEM field or enter a STEM graduate program within one year of graduation.
4. Incorporate the most effective curricular and support practices into program operation to reduce the average transfer student graduation time in biological sciences from 2.9 to 2.5 years.

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Building the WATTS Community of Scholars:

Student Cohort Experience & Opportunities

Building community and support networks

- Faculty, peer, and alumni mentoring
- Biological Sciences Speakers Program and Career Panels
- Industry experiences, internships, and career counseling

Undergraduate Student Research Opportunities

- **Research Across Disciplines:** The *Regional Science Consortium's annual Undergraduate Research Symposium,* a partnership of five liberal arts colleges, allows students to share research results and gain presentation experience.
- **The Provost's Student/Faculty Collaborative Research Grant Program** supports undergraduate students who are conducting research projects with the guidance of a faculty member.
- Contextual learning opportunities include STEM activities such as regional robotics competitions, a Natural Area Restoration project, and a computer programming challenge

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Increasing Access through WATTS:
Program Eligibility

- Be admissible as a full-time (13-18 hours), undergraduate transfer student with a declared degree in one of the following programs:
  - BA in Biology
  - BS in Biological Sciences
  - BS in Chemistry
  - BS in Computational Biology
- Apply at least 21 transferable credits toward your degree at Webster
  - Preference is given to those who have completed courses equivalent to:
    - College/Essentials of Biology I and II
    - College/General Chemistry I and II
    - College Algebra
    - www.webster.edu/watts
- Reflect a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0.
- Be a U.S. citizen, permanent resident, national, or refugee
- Demonstrate financial need as determined by the University

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Increasing Access through WATTS:

Scholarship Application Process

Step 1: **Undergraduate Application for Admission**

- Submit all supporting documents, including all official transcripts.

Step 2: **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)**

- Webster University Title IV code of **002521**.

Step 3: **One-page Personal Statement**

- Includes student's educational and career goals, interest in the intended major at Webster, and an example of a time student was a leader to others.

Step 4: **Professional/Academic Reference**

- Provide name and contact information of one current or previous biology or chemistry instructor who would be willing to serve as a reference.

Our Recruitment Approach & Challenges:
Lessons Learned

Approach:

- Why Transfers?
- Steering Committee
- Community College Liaisons

Challenges & Improvements:

- It is surprisingly difficult to give away money!
- Remove barriers to application
- More clearly define the roles of those involved in managing the grant and WATTS program
- Applicants missing key science and math courses or low GPA
  - Work closer with liaisons at community colleges
  - Publish equivalency list for preferred courses; working on more clearly-defined pathways

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Increasing Access through WATTS:

Community College Partners

- Share with **talented** and **inquisitive** students on your campus who would thrive in the **student-centered learning environment** Webster offers.
- Share with students on your campus with **a high financial need** who would benefit from the **additional scholarship funding** available through WATTS.

- Share this information with colleagues on your campus:
  - Science faculty
  - Academic advisors
  - Your students!
  - Sponsors/advisors of student organizations: STEM clubs, PTK chapters, etc.
- Contact us to establish a 2+2 transfer pathway from your college or to review course equivalencies

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Questions?
Discussion.
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More Information:

The Sciences at Webster University

http://www.webster.edu/arts-and-sciences/academics/biological-sciences/biology.html

www.webster.edu/watts